

PUBLIC NOTICE

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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DA 99-430

**FCC TO HOLD SECOND PUBLIC HEARING IN SERIES ON
TELEPHONE SERVICE FOR INDIANS ON RESERVATIONS;
SET FOR MARCH 23 IN CHANDLER, ARIZONA**

(BO DOCKET NO. 99-11)

Released: March 2, 1999

COMMENT PERIOD: Closes May 28, 1999

The Federal Communications Commission announces that a second public hearing will be held on March 23 in Chandler, Arizona in its hearing series entitled "Overcoming Obstacles to Telephone Service for Indians on Reservations." The first hearing was held on Friday, January 29, 1999, at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The second public hearing will be held on Tuesday, March 23, 1999, from 8:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., in the Gila River Indian Community, at the Sprung facility, 5550 West Wild Horse Path, Chandler, Arizona. Chandler is located approximately 20 miles southeast of central Phoenix, Arizona.

This hearing will continue to examine the ongoing concern that Indians on reservations, in comparison to other Americans, have less access even to basic telephone service. The hearing will provide an opportunity for Indian tribal and intertribal leaders, federal and state officials, telecommunications services providers, and technology experts to present testimony addressing the steps necessary to provide all Indians on reservations with the opportunity to obtain telephone service of sound quality at affordable rates.

At the hearing, the FCC will continue to study the reasons for the lack of telephone service and will examine what solutions have been undertaken by tribes and service providers to address these issues. The Commission also intends to gather evidence on measures that tribes, service providers, the FCC, and states can take in the future to improve access to affordable telephone service on Indian reservations.

The Commission requests that witnesses address issues such as the respective roles of tribal, federal, and state authorities in ensuring the availability of affordable telephone and other telecommunications services on reservations and in providing ongoing and dependable financial support for those services. Furthermore, the hearing will examine whether alternative technologies can deliver quality communications services to tribal customers.

In particular, the Commission seeks recommendations for solutions which will improve access to telephone service on reservations. Specific issues and principal matters that the hearing will explore include:

- * the costs of delivering services to remote areas having very low population densities;
- * the impact of the size and extent of local calling areas on affordability of service;
- * the quality of telephone service on reservations;
- * the availability of advanced services, including Internet access for educational uses, health-related information, and other basic needs;
- * the complexities of governmental jurisdiction and sovereignty issues;
- * the strategies applied by tribal reservations to address these issues; and
- * the effects on telephone service of low income and high unemployment levels on reservations.

The Commission welcomes written comments from all interested parties. These comments should be filed in BO Docket No. 99-11 on or before May 28, 1999 and should reference both the DA number and docket number designated above. All comments should be filed with the Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, Portals Building, 445 12th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20554.

Transcripts of the testimony at the Arizona hearing, written testimony, and comments will be available for inspection and duplication during regular business hours at the FCC Reference Center. Accordingly, interested parties are advised to contact the FCC Reference Center at (202) 418-0270.

For further information, contact Eric Jensen, at (202) 418-0990 or via e-mail at ejensen@fcc.gov, at the Office of Communications Business Opportunities; or Belford Lawson, at (202) 418-7264 or via e-mail at blawson@fcc.gov, at OCBO; or William Kehoe, at (202) 418-7122 or via e-mail at bkehoe@fcc.gov, at the Common Carrier Bureau.

By the Director, Office of Communications Business Opportunities, Federal Communications Commission.

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